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## NSW PSA elections

**THE** NSW Branch of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) has announced a series of new appointments.

Community pharmacist and academic Dr Stephen Carter has been elected as the new president of the NSW Society.

John Chapman, former ceo of the Australian College of Pharmacy and education editor of the *Australian Journal of Pharmacy* and Lisa Kouladjian, community pharmacist, PhD student and nationally and internationally decorated researcher, have been elected as vice presidents.

Outgoing NSW branch president John Bronger OAM has been elected to represent NSW as a National Board member.

## Virtual NMS delegates

**WOULD** you like to attend this month's biennial National Medicines Symposium (NMS 2014) but are unable to travel to Brisbane at that time?

Now you can be totally involved without the travel by being a virtual delegate for a cost of \$330.

The event runs from 21 to 23 May, and virtual delegates from anywhere in the world can watch the symposium and interact with other delegates and speakers in real time.

Virtual conference attendees will also have access to all sessions via video on demand exclusively for a period of four months to view speaker sessions at leisure.

Visit [www.nps.org.au/nms](http://www.nps.org.au/nms).

## 'Tax it or cut it' budget

**LEADER** of the opposition Bill Shorten's response to the budget last night said it was a "tax it or cut it" budget that signalled the beginning of extreme politics.

Shorten said the budget hit about 9m families, citing the increased cost of medicines, the hospital tax and the GP tax as costing a particular family more than \$450 per year.

The \$7 GP co-payment would not be returned to health spending but was applied to "break the universality of Medicare," he said.

"And no hypothecation to a future fund – whether medical or otherwise – justifies the measure or the wilful breach of promise it entails.

"Making medicine more expensive won't make us healthier."

Labour rejected the increase in pension age and Shorten said the budget proved the Prime Minister was "ideologically opposed" to Medicare.

"We reject a US-style, two-tiered system where your wealth determines your health."

## DoH on Future Fund

**A SPOKESPERSON** from the Department of Health said the government would establish the fund next year to provide additional funding for medical research from 2015-16, primarily through payments to the National Health and Medical Research Council.

"Decisions about specific payments will be made in the Budget process."

Shorten said Labour would vote against the university reforms and unemployment benefits cuts.

Industry reactions to the budget have been mixed (**PD** 15 May).

To read the speech, **CLICK HERE**.

## PBA Communiqué

**THE** Pharmacy Board of Australia (PBA) has released its latest communiqué resulting from its meeting in Darwin with quarterly registration data, a reminder about practitioner audits and public consultations.

**CLICK HERE** for the communiqué.

## MA on Future Fund

**MEDICINES** Australia ceo Dr Brendan Shaw said the Medical Research Future Fund (**PD** 15 May) would be a good step forward.

Driving medical research was key in terms of patient and economic benefits, he said.

"It could help to assist growth in Australian exports through commercialisation of new therapies and meet global health needs, including generating economy wide dividends for Australia.

"But it is still early days, so I don't think we should jump too far ahead.

"A key issue we'd like to discuss with the Government is how to leverage this growth in medical research funding to ensure we can commercialise it for the benefit of Australia and build our innovative economy."

## Statins substantiated

**THE** authors of two articles published in the peer-reviewed *British Medical Journal (BMJ)* last year are withdrawing statements about the adverse effects of statins.

This follows ABC's decision that a Catalyst episode on statins and heart disease had breached its standards of impartiality (**PD** 13 May).

The withdrawal was met with acclaim from cardiologists identified for comment by the UK Science Media Centre.

The authors had incorrectly concluded from an observational study that 18 to 20% of patients suffered side effects, an interpretation which was repeated in another article in the publication.

The *BMJ* editor-in-chief has asked an independent panel to decide whether the articles should be retracted.

## FDA Pradaxa review

**THE** US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently completed a new study in Medicare patients comparing Pradaxa to warfarin for risk of ischemic or clot-related stroke, bleeding in the brain, major gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding, myocardial infarction (MI) and death.

Pradaxa was associated with a lower risk of clot-related strokes, bleeding in the brain, and death, than warfarin.

The study also found an increased risk of major gastrointestinal bleeding with use of Pradaxa as compared to warfarin; however MI risk was similar for the two drugs.

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### Jobs of the Week

- **Customer Care Pharmacist** - Melbourne's West, VIC (Job# 2010555)  
P/t time role for a confident Pharmacist to counsel and engage customers.
- **Pharmacy Manager** - Newcastle, NSW (Job# 2010547)  
Hospital role - 10 month maternity leave contract - August start date.
- **Pharmacist Manager** - North Coast, QLD (Job# 2009865)  
Autonomous role for an experienced Pharmacist - committed team.

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Contact the APHS Packaging Customer Service team for more details and to sign-up on...

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## Events Calendar

**WELCOME** to *Pharmacy Daily's* events calendar, opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email [info@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au).

**17-18 May:** Early Career Leadership Seminar; Adelaide; for more info go to: [www.shpa.org.au](http://www.shpa.org.au)

**18 May:** "Complementary Medicines: an evidence-guided approach" Seminar; Brisbane; for more info see: [www.pharmeducation.com.au](http://www.pharmeducation.com.au)

**25-31 May:** Macular Degeneration Awareness Week; for more info see: [www.mdfoundation.com.au](http://www.mdfoundation.com.au)

**30 May - 1 Jun:** Clinical and Practice Expo 2014, Sydney; see: [www.psa.org.au/cpexpo](http://www.psa.org.au/cpexpo) or email [cpexpo@psa.org.au](mailto:cpexpo@psa.org.au)

**1-3 Jun:** ConPharm 2014; Port Douglas; for more info go to: [www.conpharm14.com.au](http://www.conpharm14.com.au)

**1-3 Jun:** 20th International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2014); Melbourne; see more at: [www.aids2014.org](http://www.aids2014.org)

**3-4 Jun:** Pharmacy "Essential Financial Skills"; Melbourne; see: [www.fmrbusdev.com.au](http://www.fmrbusdev.com.au)

**20-22 Jun:** National Convention & Exhibition; Sydney; details: [www.nswpharmacy-nce.com.au](http://www.nswpharmacy-nce.com.au)

**22-23 Jul:** Pharmacy "Essential Financial Skills"; Sydney; see: [www.fmrbusdev.com.au](http://www.fmrbusdev.com.au)

**25-26 Jul:** Blackmores Institute Symposium: Integrating Natural Medicine Into Community Pharmacy - An Evidence-Based Approach; Sydney; more at: [www.blackmoresinstitute.com.au](http://www.blackmoresinstitute.com.au)

**26-27 Jul:** Medication Review Skills in Primary Care; Sydney; more at: [www.shpa.org.au](http://www.shpa.org.au)

**30 Jul:** Advanced Clinical Education Cardiovascular Seminar; Sydney; more at: [www.psa.org.au](http://www.psa.org.au)

## Free scripts for NZ kids

**THE** New Zealand government has released its 2014-15 budget in which it said it would set aside NZ\$90m for free prescriptions and general practitioner (GP) visits for children under 13 years of age (**PD** breaking news yesterday).

The move was part of the NZ government providing extra support for families and young children, Finance Minister Bill English said in the budget summary.

The policy will begin on 01 July 2015 and the budget provided for \$30m in 2015-16, \$30m in 2016-17 and \$30m in 2017-18.

Previously, prescriptions were only free for children under six, with subsidised medicines incurring a prescription charge of NZ\$5.

A cap exists at 20 prescription items a year, when a Prescription Subsidy Card is issued and prescriptions are free until 01 Feb the next year.

The policy would affect more than 400,000 children in the country, NZ Minister for Health Tony Ryall said.

This was a preventative health measure in that parents would be more likely to seek treatment for children before their condition worsened and would help reduce the number of children presenting at emergency departments with GP-treatable illnesses, he said.

The NZ health budget will have another NZ\$1.8b pumped into it over four years, according to the budget, which would take it to a total NZ\$15.6b next year.

New initiatives included NZ\$32.7m for faster cancer

treatment, Ryall said.

The Pharmacy Guild of New Zealand (PGNZ) ceo Lee Hohaia said the free prescriptions and GP visits was a big win for communities as it would help families struggling to cover medical costs.

"The Guild has always supported the targeting of co-payments, and is pleased to see this being applied to children under 13.

"We would welcome further extension of this targeting to other at risk groups such as the elderly and high deprivation communities."

## GSK China fraud

**THE** former general manager of pharmaceuticals for GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) China and Hong Kong, Mark Reilly, and other colleagues have been charged with corruption.

GSK confirmed its China business was being investigated by authorities over allegations of fraudulent behaviour.

*Reuters* reported that these allegations included GSK making billions from bribing doctors and hospitals to boost sales, with Reilly and two executives suspected of bribing officials in the industry and commerce departments of Beijing and Shanghai.

GSK UK said it was "deeply concerned" by the allegations and was taking the matter "very seriously", co-operating with Chinese authorities.

"GSK has zero tolerance for any behaviour of this nature."

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## DISPENSARY CORNER



**PHARMACISTS** have to ask many a question of customers to help with health outcomes but one you may not have thought of is the replicant test from *Bladerunner*, which NZ Justice Minister Judith Collins (@JudithCollinsMP) managed to fail, according to the *Listener*.

Danyl McLauchlan (@danlymc) administered the famous test last year in response to a query about whether she was doing her own tweeting, saying "You're walking through the desert and you see a turtle lying on its back, struggling. You don't help it. Why is that?"

Minister Collins replied "It's going to die anyway?" to which McLauchlan said "It's her alright."

## WIN WITH BIOSPORT



This week **PD** is giving 5 readers the chance to win a BioSport Moulded Reflex Sole and a hat.

The Moulded Reflex Soles have the magnetic technology of BioSports Gel Reflex Sole mixed with BioSport's



ongoing initiative to provide better support. They have specially designed foot beds to ensure support, comfort, and shock absorption.

To win, be first to send in the correct answer to the question to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au).

**What 3 things are the footbeds in the Moulded Reflex Soles designed to do?**

Congratulations to yesterday's winner Belinda Morris from AFS Pharmacies

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